

Public Safety and Security Committee- Thursday, February 5, 2015

Bill HB-5378

Testimony

20 years when looking into the mirror I didn't know nor did like the person looking back at me. I was not a drug addict or an alcoholic, but I was in the deepest darkest black hole of my life.

I had been arrested, in the process of a divorce after 36 years of marriage lost my family, tried suicide three times, and had lost the respect of the people who had trust in me.

I was always a person in control of my life and all of a sudden I was spinning out of control something else was in control. Gambling had taken control of my life.

I was a casino gambler. It started out as a fun activity, going occasionally but then the big win happened. I had won \$27,500 on a five dollar slot machine. That was the kiss of death because if I won that I certainly could win more.

As I started to lose the Chace for the win began and by the time it was over I had lost over \$200,000.00. This was savings, 401k plans, and retirement investments. I had lost it all. Respect, embarrassment, and shame followed.

Coming home from the casino after playing for 48hrs straight I fell asleep at the wheel and woke up just in time before I hit the car in front of me possibility killing or hurting someone who had nothing to do with my addiction.

I enrolled in the Wheeler Clinic Bettor Choice Gambling treatment program still resistant, but that program saved my life. Had it not been for that program I would be either dead or incarcerated today.

I accept responsibility for my actions we make choices in our lives and there are consequences for the choices we make.

Today 16 years gambling free I work with problem gamblers in the community and in our state correctional faculties. I have appeared on local and National radio and TV. I have presented at a press conference at the U.S. House of Representatives on the addiction.

I am not against nor am I for gambling. Only the negative effects it has and will cause our citizens.

If the expansion of gambling is being considered for our state I ask that funding is in place for prevention, education and treatment of this addiction. I think we all have to remember; the gambler did not bring gambling to the state, the state has brought gambling to the gambler and has a responsibility to help these individuals as well as their family members with the negative effect of this addiction.

Respectfully